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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2096
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0904
RUEHWN/AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN 1455
RUEHKG/AMEMBASSY KINGSTON 1940
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 2407
RUEHBH/AMEMBASSY NASSAU 2637
RUEHSP/AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN 1593
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 0738
RUEHDG/AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO 0325
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0237
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC 0351
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0786

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 PORT AU PRINCE 000124

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CAR
DRL
S/CRS
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
INR/IAA (BEN-YEHUDA)
TREASURY FOR JEFFREY LEVINE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PKAO](#) [HA](#)

SUBJECT: HAITI ELECTIONS: FEBRUARY 7 ON TRACK, WITH BUMPS
IN THE ROAD

11. (SBU) Summary: MINUSTAH and OAS officials in a January 13 meeting with donors explained that while some significant problems need to be resolved, the February 7 first round is technically possible. Political party complaints about the number of voting centers and voting center assignments have increased in recent weeks, as has pressure to finalize the location of voting centers for the violent Port-au-Prince slum of Cite Soleil. According to the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) and MINUSTAH, most voting center problems should be fixed by January 18, and all remaining problems, including Cite Soleil voting centers, must be solved by January 25 in order to maintain the February 7 first round. MINUSTAH worried that continued CEP and interim government plans to transmit results by satellite (VSAT) could jeopardize the credibility of elections results because the VSAT results would not be monitored by the international community. The OAS estimated January 17 that it had distributed 2.6 million ID cards. OAS chief Elizabeth Spehar reiterated, however, that in order to maximize voter participation and minimize claims of exclusion, the CEP and interim government must allow voting with registration receipts. MINUSTAH logistics chief Colonel Barry MacLeod plans to conduct a mock election on January 28 to test procedures. The exercise will include distribution of elections materials, ballot collection, and a test of the MINUSTAH tabulation center. According to MINUSTAH elections chief Gerard Lechevallier, MINUSTAH faces a budget shortfall of USD 500,000 to conduct the first and second rounds of national elections, but does not have sufficient resources to conduct local elections, currently planned for April. End Summary.

12. (SBU) Voting Centers

CEP General Director Jacques Bernard said January 6 that the

CEP must settle all issues relating to voting centers by January 25, allowing MINUSTAH Electoral Task Force Head Colonel MacLeod sufficient time to assure security and delivery of election materials to each voting center. MacLeod reported January 13 that MINUSTAH and the CEP would fix nearly all of voting center problems by January 18 and would identify remaining issues by January 20, which it would fix by January 25.

Bernard has decided to locate all Cite Soleil voting centers on the periphery of the slum in order to better ensure security. MacLeod said on January 13 that he awaited the CEP and MINUSTAH selection of these locations to finalize logistics planning. MINUSTAH elections chief Gerard Lechevallier countered locating the centers outside of Cite Soleil could spark violent protest and claims of exclusion by the international press. He said MINUSTAH would wait one or two weeks and then attempt to open card distribution and prepare for voting in Cite Soleil. However, MacLeod argued that MINUSTAH must accept that it does not control Cite Soleil and concentrate on voting outside the slum as the only feasible solution.

Key Dates

January 20: All voting center problems identified
January 25: Voting center problems (including Cite Soleil) addressed

Comment: Political parties have shifted their elections criticisms from the ID card distribution to voting centers. Though the parties make general accusations that voting center problems are widespread, none have cited more than anecdotal evidence of problems. Because MINUSTAH logistics

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needs time to integrate new voting centers into its logistics plan, Lechevallier does not have time to wait two weeks to see if MINUSTAH can secure Cite Soleil. Some radio stations in Port-au-Prince are discussing voting outside Cite Soleil, but MINUSTAH and the CEP should publicly announce their decision to keep voting outside of Cite Soleil and clearly and transparently explain their reasoning to distrustful Cite Soleil residents and the skeptical international press. End Comment.

13. (SBU) VSAT and Tabulation

Bernard reported January 6 that the Minister of the Interior claims to have distributed satellite (VSAT) antennas to all of the BECs for results transmission. However, the BECs lack electricity and computers to run the VSAT system and CEP president Max Mathurin wrote a letter January 11 to the UNDP asking that the UN repair generators at the BECs and provide computers for the VSAT system. UNDP said the UN would not financially support the VSAT system because it believed the project too costly and likely to fail, as it did in Venezuela, Afghanistan, and Canada. Canadian elections expert Francois Montour said he believed if the VSAT system is finished it could be used to alter or invalidate the results of the election.

Comment: Though donors and UN agree the VSAT system should be stopped, they lamented that it is Haitian funded, and there is little the international community can do apart from withholding its own money. However, in a January 10 draft of a letter to Minister of Interior Paul Magloire, the CEP outlined its plan to implement the system, which relied on international money and technical assistance. Nonetheless, a Canadian diplomat said Canada plans to make every effort to stop the system so that it cannot taint election results. End Comment.

14. (SBU) ID Distribution Progresses, Voting without IDs Still Key

Though the OAS said January 13 it has the capacity to distribute up to 340,000 cards per day, card distribution is going more slowly than anticipated, roughly 100,000 cards are distributed per day. MINUSTAH projected January 17 that 2.6 million of the 3.5 million total ID cards had been distributed, but said that because of reporting delays from the field they can only confirm 2.4 million. The OAS plans to close card distribution January 21, and reopen it from the communal election bureaus (BECs) January 25. However, OAS elections chief Elizabeth Spehar said January 13 that the CEP had not yet agreed to the plan to continue distribution from the BECs.

Though ID cards are now in Haiti, Spehar cautioned that some voters would inevitably fail to retrieve their cards. She said voters must be able to vote with their receipts. MINUSTAH reported that the poll worker-training program anticipates voting with receipts. However, while voting with registration receipts is already technically legal, losing political parties would likely exploit ambiguities in the law to contest results if receipt voting is widespread. CEP DG Bernard has drafted an amendment to the electoral law making it absolutely clear that voting with registration receipts is legal. The IGOH should promulgate the amendment in order to avoid confusion and prevent contestation.

Key Dates:

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January 21: End of ID Distribution Extension
January 22 - 24: Undistributed IDs to BECs
January 25: Card distribution reopens in BECs
February 6: Card distribution closes in BECs

Comment: Card distribution is well in hand and has ceased to be the focus of election complaints. Maintaining distribution at the BECs should help voters to get the last cards out and prevent criticism that some voters could not retrieve their IDs. Nonetheless, in order to ensure maximum participation, voters must be allowed to vote even if they have not picked up their IDs. After card distribution has closed, post will push the IGOH to clarify the legality of voting with receipts. End Comment.

15. (SBU) Election Dry Run Will Test Logistics

MINUSTAH elections Electoral Task Force Head Colonel MacLeod reported that MINUSTAH would use the distribution of non-sensitive material to test the logistics system in late January. During the test, MINUSTAH will distribute the non-sensitive material along with mock sensitive material. It will then run an election with Muppet character candidates, collect the ballot boxes, and test the results transmission and counting systems. MacLeod said he would attempt to complete the test run and fix any logistics problems with the system before any sensitive material is sent to the voting centers.

Key Dates:

January 16 - 25: Sensitive Material to MINUSTAH Departmental Military Compounds
January 28 - 29: Test of Elections Logistics
January 30 - February 5: Non-sensitive material to voting centers
February 5 - 7: Sensitive material to voting centers

Comment: While MacLeod's test run is important and necessarily short given the elections timetable, compressing it into two days is overly optimistic. In the same meeting that MacLeod presented his plan, MINUSTAH elections chief Lechevallier warned that it could take three to five days for

all elections results to arrive in Port-au-Prince because some results might have to travel by donkey from otherwise inaccessible areas. MINUSTAH must be careful not to let their test interfere with the election timetable, but should nevertheless use the demonstration to raise expectations about the security of the vote while lowering them about the speed of results transmission. End Comment.

16. (SBU) Election Budget Okay for First and Second Rounds

MINUSTAH elections chief Lechevallier reported that with no additional changes, the first and second rounds, including the delay to February 7, would cost USD 59.6 million and that MINUSTAH had received USD 59.1 million leaving a USD 500,000 shortfall. However, Gerardo said privately that he continues to juggle money because MINUSTAH plans to hire more guards, people for crowd control, and civic education workers. He also said he is trying to keep some money aside in case the CEP decides to fold municipal elections into the second round. He said local elections would cost an additional USD 13.6 million.

Comment: Privately, MINUSTAH contacts tell us they do not believe local elections are possible. MINUSTAH has no money for local elections and though the problems with voting

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centers are passable for the national contest, voting center assignments would require a complete overhaul for the local elections. Local elections will likely be indefinitely postponed for budgetary and logistical reasons. Post recommends the mayoral election be included with the second round in order to preserve local independence from the executive and promote democratic state decentralization. End Comment.

CARNEY